

Section 2 The Planning Process

2.1 Description of the Plan- Overview

The Greenway Master Plan employs a comprehensive planning approach aimed at understanding the myriad of dynamic forces and complex factors involved in greenway, trail, and open space planning, including the *incentives for citizen endorsement*. Future greenway updates will build upon the foundational efforts of this plan with more emphasis on target areas for continued open space protection and recreational trail development. The Greenway Master Plan, seen as a component of the Open Space Plan, is dedicated to protecting critical open spaces, sensitive environmental systems, natural heritage sites, parkland, scenic areas and historic properties. Other open space elements will be coordinated in the future as planning resources become available. These elements are detailed in the Open Space graphic, Appendix 13.1.

One major emphasis of the Greenway Master Plan document was to demonstrate the multi-objective benefits of greenways as a planning tool. Some of these advantages include enhancing the economic, recreational, transportation, environmental, educational, and quality of life concerns that citizens have raised in response to growth pressures in the County.

Inventories of significant sites such as parks, schools, natural areas, conservation areas, and historic sites were gathered to aid map development. An analysis map determined the opportunity and suitability of various areas and laid the groundwork for greenway corridor recommendations. These corridor recommendations are conceptual routes and connections shown on a base map for public viewing. These maps are intended to initiate public discussion, gaining feedback and ideas to further aid in establishing greenway and trail corridors. In addition, the open space and greenway plans of neighboring jurisdictions will be included.

The final step created a network of bikeways, sidewalks, and greenways with phasing and implementation strategies. The plan detailed trail components such as trail types, surface types, users, parking and trail access, intersections, bridges, site furnishings, signage, and cost estimates. Other issues addressed were American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, liability/risk management, operations, and maintenance.

While James City County will greatly benefit from the Greenway Master Plan, several contentious issues arose during the public outreach process including personal property rights vs. voluntary easements, public safety concerns, conceptual corridors vs. approved corridors, funding, environmental impacts, and property acquisition concerns. The education program and the master plan text addressed these concerns.

2.2 Guiding Principles

The Greenway Master Plan's guiding principles create a comprehensive system of connected open spaces and trail opportunities to benefit our community. These include:

- Propose greenway connections that link neighborhoods, schools, parks, libraries, shopping centers, places of employment, and community services.
- Develop partnerships that build upon grass roots citizen input for public buy-in.
- Integrate trail, sidewalk, and bikeway development to share funds and coordinate services.

- Provide a diversity of safe trail systems for a myriad of trail users and uses, such as paved, soft surface, multiuse, and educational trails, and trails with ADA access.
- Create a public document detailing design standards, construction practices, and funding strategies for incorporation in future planning and design projects, including roadways, subdivisions, corporate centers, and public facilities.
- Integrate the Greenway Master Plan with other plans, such as the Comprehensive Plan, the Regional Bikeway Master Plan, transportation plans, the Sidewalk Master Plan, the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan, and others.

2.3 Methodology- Key Players And Approval Process

The success of the Greenway Master Plan hinged upon strong citizen involvement. A primary goal was to educate all citizens about the positive benefits of greenways and to provide numerous opportunities for citizens to be involved in the master plan process. A variety of communication and community outreach methods underpinned this effort, including focus group sessions, which gathered input from a broad cross section of the community. Preliminary documents were prepared by staff, with Steering Committee oversight, and distributed to citizens at public comment meetings.

Key Players

Citizens were invited to participate in public meetings to provide vision for the development of the current and future greenway system.

Citizen Advisory Group

The Citizen Advisory Group is an informal group of persons who were invited to attend Steering Committee meetings. Their participation during public input helped guide the Steering Committee. Invited by the James City County Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, they helped advocate support of the Greenway Master Plan. They were also invited to attend focus group sessions serving as the grass roots liaisons to the community. Groups included: The Williamsburg Land Conservancy, Friends of The Powhatan Creek Watershed, The Williamsburg Bird Club, Colonial Road Runners, Historic Triangle Bicycle Advisory Committee, Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Trails Association, Rails to Trails Conservancy, Appalachian Trail Club, Community Development, Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services, Virginia Department of Transportation, National Park Service, Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation/State Parks, Dominion/Virginia Power and other utilities, James City Service Authority, Williamsburg/James City Public Schools, James City County Historic Commission, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Jamestown 4-H Club, Master Gardeners, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District.

Steering Committee

The Board of Supervisors appointed a Steering Committee in March 2001 to take an active role, meet monthly, and act on behalf of staff and citizens to gather, review, and comment on technical information. It will be their work and writing that constitute draft versions of the Greenway Master Plan. The Steering Committee consisted of one Parks and Recreation

Advisory Commission member, one Planning Commission member, five citizens appointed by the Board of Supervisors, and one member at large (WJC Schools representative). The Steering Committee delivered its final recommendation to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission on March 5, 2002.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission oversaw the drafting process, received monthly status reports from staff, and received the formal master plan from the Steering Committee. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission held a public hearing on April 17 to gather public comment and met with the Planning Commission on May 6 to receive their questions and comments. On May 15, the Advisory Commission endorsed the plan and then forwarded their recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission received monthly status reports from staff and the Steering Committee representative. The Planning Commission received the formal draft plan from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission in the form of a reading file item on April 1. The Advisory Commission made a presentation to the Planning Commission on May 6.

Board of Supervisors

The Board of Supervisors has the ultimate review and approval authority over the Greenway Master Plan. The Board's decision on plan revisions will be based on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission's recommendation and all work, discussions and issues that led to the development of the recommendation. In addition, the Board selected members to serve on the Steering Committee. The presentation by the Advisory Commission is scheduled for June 25.

Staff

The Director of Parks and Recreation, the Manager of Development Management, the Park and Greenway Planner, and other staff were responsible for guiding and ensuring the accomplishment of the Greenway Master Plan review process. Staff was responsible for public participation elements and assumed the lead responsibility for necessary technical work and plan preparation. Staff worked throughout the process to develop educational materials for public information, to ensure that timetables were followed, and that strong, professional guidance led the effort.

Public Input

The Greenway Steering Committee, with assistance from the Citizen Advisory Group, conducted public meetings at various locations throughout the County (i.e. library and recreation centers). These meetings were designed to gather public input. Attendees were given an overview of the Greenway Master Plan process and a summary of expectations for that meeting. Citizens were encouraged to voice their opinions and contribute to the plan's development. Citizen notification of public meetings was conducted as outlined in the Communication and Education Plan.

2.4 Communication and Education Plan

The strategy for garnering public support hinged upon a strong communication and education plan coupled with public outreach during focus group public meetings. Educating citizens about the nature and substance of greenways was essential to the success of the plan. It alleviated some misunderstandings citizens may have had relative to greenways and the master plan process. Communicating this information in a variety of media formats ensured that as many citizens as possible had means available to get this information.

Several media formats were used to communicate the greenway program over a five-month period that included:

1. A four-page supplement article on greenways was produced for the August FYI issue, the County's bi-monthly newsletter with 5,000 direct mailings. This publication served as the primary education piece during the master plan process and was placed at various parks, libraries, government buildings, and was also made available at public meetings.
2. A live cable interview featuring the Greensprings Greenway was aired in August 2001 on Community Cable Channel 48.
3. Information about public meeting dates was published in the *Ship's Log* and community calendars throughout the five-month period.
4. Invitations to attend the focus groups meetings were emailed and mailed to a Citizen Advisory Group representing 40+ citizen groups and stakeholders.
5. A feature article appeared on the front page of the *Virginia Gazette* on August 18, 2001, and a follow-up article appeared on November 7, 2001.
6. A feature article appeared in the *Daily Press* on November 12, 2001.
7. Public meeting notices were placed in the *Virginia Gazette* prior to all meetings.
8. The FYI article was put on the JCC Internet home page: www.james-city.va.us.
9. A Parks and Recreation Internet survey, based on focus group questions, was sent to 131 citizens interested in Parks and Recreation issues.
10. A survey regarding the Greenway Master Plan was placed on the JCC Internet home page asking citizens what greenway issue they deemed most important. During this six-week period in November and December 2001, 364 responses were tallied.
11. A talk show aired on Community Cable Channel 48 during November 22-27, 2001, that discussed the Greenway Master Plan with the Park and Greenway Planner and two Greenway Steering Committee members.
12. A Greenway Master Plan telephone hotline (259-3241) was established to help gather citizen comments 24 hours a day.

Other means of communicating information to the public and citizen notification regarding public meetings were handled through the JCC Office of Communications and Neighborhood Connections. Information notices were made available to 111 James City County neighborhood associations. Greenway Master Plan education sessions were hosted during a Neighborhood Networks meeting on October 18, 2001, the Neighborhood Conference meeting on February 23, 2002. In addition, a presentation was made on January 22, 2002 to the Regional Issues Committee.